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Proclamation 7181—Pan American Day and Pan American Week, 1999

April 9, 1999

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Inspired by the powerful words of Thomas Jefferson, the courageous military tactics of José de San Martín, and the revolutionary spirit of Simón Bolívar and many other leaders, the peoples of the Americas forged their nations with a profound respect for liberty and justice. Today, a devotion to democratic ideals unifies the countries in our hemisphere. The strengthening of democratic institutions and practices throughout the Americas reflects our enduring commitment to human rights, free and fair elections, and the rule of law. The expansion of open markets illustrates our determination to achieve sustainable economic growth. At the dawn of a new millennium, we must work with a renewed spirit of cooperation to meet the challenges of our future and fulfill the destiny of our region.

In strengthening the ties that bind our nations together, we reaffirm our shared commitment of democracy and to the security of our hemisphere. Last April, the democratically elected leaders of our hemisphere met in Santiago, Chile, for the second Summit of the Americas. Building on the foundation laid at the Miami Summit in 1994, we developed an action plan for the future. Our strategy includes concrete methods to strengthen democracy, protect human rights, increase access to education, expand free and fair trade, and reduce corruption.

Thanks in part to the strong bonds between the nations of the Americas, our region has achieved an unprecedented era of peace and stability. As one of the world's oldest regional alliances, the Organization of American States has served as a guiding institution in that endeavor. Through several vital initiatives, it has worked to foster multilateral cooperation, to bolster hemispheric security, to resolve regional disputes, and to combat corruption, drug trafficking, and international terrorism. Our community of democracies also encouraged the governments of Peru and Ecuador to sign an historic Peace Accord last October that finally put their long-standing border dispute to an end.

As we look to our common future, we must not forget that our vision for the Western Hemisphere also includes Cuba, whose citizens must be allowed the fruits of liberty and the rewards of integration. We must also remember that our commitment to closer cooperation becomes especially important in times of tragedy. As hundreds of thousands of people across the Americas work to rebuild their homes and their lives in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch and the earthquake in Colombia, we must be there to lend a helping hand and to provide the tools necessary to revitalize the economies of our neighbors and help renew their communities. United by a proud history and a shared interest in deepening political, cultural, and economic ties, the democracies of our hemisphere can serve as a beacon of peace and prosperity for citizens around the world.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim Wednesday, April 14, 1999, as Pan American Day and April 11 through April 17, 1999, as Pan American Week. I urge the Governors of the 50 States, the Governor of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the officials of other areas under the flag of the United States to honor these observances with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this ninth day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., April 12, 1999]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on April 13.

Proclamation 7182—National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day, 1999

April 9, 1999

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

"We are honored to have had the opportunity to serve our country . . . ." With these simple words, Navy Commander Jeremiah Denton, released in 1973 from North Vietnam with his companions after the longest wartime captivity of any group of Americans in our history, summed up the courage, selflessness, and indomitable spirit of generations of American prisoners of war.

For more than two centuries, Americans have risked and lost their own freedom to defend democracy, preserve America's liberty and values, and protect our national interests around the world. In Andersonville or along the Yalu River, confined in Nazi stalags or enduring torture in the Hanoi Hilton, our prisoners of war have set an extraordinary example of valor, patriotism, and devotion to duty in the face of enormous hardship and adversity. The somber black and white POW/MIA flag serves as a reminder of their sacrifice and symbolizes our Nation's deep concern for and steadfast commitment to these brave Americans and their families.

But, however dark and trying the ordeal for our prisoners of war, their sacrifices did indeed serve a grand purpose. Inspired by their bravery in captivity, our Nation has been resolute in its defense of liberty. And, because of their sacrifice, the United States today is strong, free, and prosperous, looking forward to a future of limitless possibility.

Today we pay special tribute to our Nation's former prisoners of war and their families and express our heartfelt gratitude for their many sacrifices. They have embodied the ideals of a strong people and a free Nation. They have represented America at its best, and they have served a grateful Nation with honor, dignity, and distinction. As we honor them, let us also keep foremost in our thoughts and prayers Staff Sergeant Andrew Ramirez, Staff Sergeant Christopher Stone, and Specialist Steven Gonzalez of the United States Army as they endure unjust captivity in Yugoslavia and as we work for their safety and swift release.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 9, 1999, as National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day. I call upon all Americans to join me in remembering former American prisoners of war who suffered the hardships of enemy captivity. I also call upon Federal, State, and local government officials and private organizations to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this ninth day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

William J. Clinton

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NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on April 13.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on a Condition of the Convention on Nuclear Safety

April 9, 1999

Dear _____:

In accordance with Condition (1) of the resolution of advice and consent to ratification of the Convention on Nuclear Safety, adopted by the United States Senate on March 25, 1999, I hereby certify that the United States Government will not engage in any multilateral activity in the field of international nuclear regulation or nuclear safety that unnecessarily duplicates a multilateral activity undertaken pursuant to the Convention.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Jesse Helms, chairman, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations;